



*Disciples of Jesus, discipling in love.*

## **Guidelines for Sponsors of Saint Nicholas Children**

*Matthew 18:3*

*And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."*

The children of Saint Nicholas are precious and much different than their counterparts in the American culture. Their happiness is not dependent on latest toys or fashions. Although denied many material possessions and the constant love and supervision of parents, these children are very well behaved, happy, sharing, and fun to be with. Visitors are amazed that when one child is given a prized gift, it is soon seen with that child's friends and is considered community property. They are very grateful for sponsors, visitors and Church of the Apostles. A sponsor can play an important role in the hope, future, confidence and upbringing of a Saint Nicholas child. The purpose of this guide is to help the sponsor in supporting their sponsored child from the United States, to recommend constructive approaches to sponsorship and provide understanding of some of the cultural differences.

*Matthew 19:14*

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

### **SPONSOR'S CALL**

Thanks to each of you for your generous heart. You are a great blessing to the child you sponsor. Your prayers, financial support, love and interest show this one that they have value both in your eyes and in those of the heavenly Father. By your letter writing or your visit you have changed this child, and you have changed your own life because you have become a part of the child's life story. Again whether you have the chance to one day meet or not, THANK YOU for responding to this call; you have already made a big difference in a child's life.

### **RESOURCES FOR SPONSORS**

Sponsoring a child should be pure joy and this guide and other resources are available to help.

Charlie and Carolyn Baldwin are Church of the Apostles mission leader for Saint Nicholas. They maintain child and sponsor lists, records of sponsor donations, send funds to Saint Nicholas, coordinate visits, and otherwise foster the relationship with



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Saint Nicholas leadership. They are available to support the sponsor programs and answer most questions.

There are several people who visit Saint Nicholas Children's Home throughout the year and can assist and advise sponsors in many ways. These missionaries carry mail, recruit sponsors, communicate needs and joys, buy and delivery gifts and needed supplies, keep an eye on health and welfare, and help you mentor your sponsored child. You will get to know these missionaries as they provide a conduit for communication and share stories about just how wonderful your sponsored child is and the blessings that are coming from your love.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Although financial support is important, another obligation that is also important is letting the child get to know you and know that you care about them. One of the problems is that they have for the most part not had parental love and thus there is a void in their life. A great relationship can be developed through normal mail and other communications. Of course, traveling to Kenya to meet your child, help them enter a high school, buy the requisite uniforms and exercising parental skills is one option but is not necessary. Mailing of personal letters, birthday cards, personal or family pictures, favorite bible verses, stickers, etc., is encouraged and should be sent to:

YOUR CHILD'S NAME  
St Nicholas Children's Home  
PO Box 24469  
Nairobi, Kenya

At times there will be an opportunity to talk to a child on WhatsApp or another app. Saint Nicholas has WIFI around the administration building and a few people have cell phones.

### **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Kenya is a poor country with up to 30 percent unemployment. An epidemic of AIDs has gravely impacted the population and may be a factor in the child's family and their need for the care and love that Saint Nicholas provides. The Anglican Church of Kenya operates Saint Nicholas, but cannot support the necessary expenses. Sponsorship support is the foundation for funding Saint Nicholas. There is a financial obligation which is \$60 per month or \$700 per year for a younger child. Sponsors unable to meet that full obligation may discuss a reduced obligation with



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the team leaders from Church of the Apostles, Charlie and Carolyn Baldwin. Once they are ready for high school, the expense will increase as Kenya does not provide free education above 8th grade. All sponsorship checks should be made out to and sent to Church of the Apostles with "Saint Nicholas" on the memo line, and a note that provides the name of the child.

### **GIFT GIVING**

It is very difficult for the staff to receive bulky items in the mail. Anything more than a flat envelope is likely to be charged a collection fee. The Kenyan government charges import duties on incoming goods such as parcels. Only printed material is not subjected to duties. The Saint Nicholas staff DOES NOT have any money to pay for this charge.

The Church of the Apostles missionaries who live at St Nicholas for several months a year can provide a vital link to a sponsored child. Although the missionaries may take some small items and letters on their trips (within airline luggage allowance), it is best for the sponsor to give the missionary a small amount of money that can be spent by the child or responsible adult so the child can have something extra that they desire. If you would like to have your child blessed with something more than your love and benefits of sponsorship you can provide following:

- gym shoes or other clothing
- a coveted item like a watch
- personal hygiene items, which are much appreciated by the older children (basic soaps and feminine products are provided)
- books and crayons for coloring,
- money for an ice cream or candy treats that can be shared with a friend
- a soccer ball
- money to be spent at the cyber café to send you an email
- a book or bible

Perhaps after reading this list you can see how your few extra dollars can really be stretched to bring these children a little extra joy. I think you are also blessed when you read that they share everything. It is so wonderful to see them share even just a small thing with another child.

It is not recommended that expensive gifts, knives, make-up, electronic games or music players, or stylish clothing be provided to the children. Games and music are



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considered a distraction from school and study, and the dress code requires conservative shirts/blouses and long pants and dresses.

*Mark 9:37*

*"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."*

### **EDUCATION**

Primary education in Kenya runs from Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. At the beginning of 8<sup>th</sup> grade the students begin an intense year of academic work. They will be tested on all subjects at the end of the year (November). This is a national test and they are competing with all students throughout Kenya. After the exams they are given a score which then allows them admission to previously chosen government school. Then the child and guardian must make a decision about the quality of these schools and how they match the child's abilities and personality. There are many private schools available and some of these may be financially achievable. This would be done on an individual child and sponsor basis. The missionaries would be able to help guide this decision and prepare the child to enter. High school is a four-year endeavor and at the end the child is tested again and scored against all other students in Kenya. At that point the child has had only academic training and may have gained a few life skills. They are then in need of some type of professional training which maybe technical or university level. The children as a whole are very motivated to learn and perform well academically.

### **CULTURAL MATTERS**

There are significant differences between African and Western culture, but that should not be a problem for a sponsor of a child at Saint Nicholas. If visiting Kenya, a sponsor should be prepared for different norms in relationships and economic structure. In poor countries, not all children in orphanages are true orphans. Occasionally a child has close relatives but they cannot support them. Sometimes the homes are not safe for young children.

### **POINTS OF CONTACT**

Church of the Apostles  
3957 Pender Dr #100  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
703.591.1974

Charlie & Carolyn Baldwin  
9736 Ranger Road  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
[carolynsheaven@gmail.com](mailto:carolynsheaven@gmail.com)  
ccbaldwin@verizon.net  
703-352-2551 571-212-5683 703-338-9478



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*Matthew 11:25*

*At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.*

One more thing that you can do support your child and the entire home is to give a monetary gift which can be added to the building fund, scholarship fund or a general fund which can be used as the staff sees a particular urgent need.

Let me finally encourage each of you to think and pray about coming to St. Nicholas. The journey itself is really quite easy. The cost is do able and you can find bargain fares if you plan ahead. You would probably want to stay for about 10 days on your first trip. You will be able to stay right on the grounds of the orphanage so you will be able to experience all aspects of the children's life. The children are so delightful and engaging. They will be blessed to meet you and I think you will be encouraged in your life as you see the gentle nature, bright minds and thankful hearts of these children. The bible says in the book of James 'That those who are poor in the eyes of the world are rich in faith.'

**Bwana asafewi!!** (Praise God in Swahili)